

Council 4 AFSCME Testimony
Before the Commerce, Finance and Labor Committees Joint Informational Forum
Oct. 11, 2011

Good afternoon Chairpersons and Members of the Committees. My name is Brian Anderson. I am the legislative advocate for Council 4 AFSCME, a union of 35,000 public and non-profit employees.

I want to thank the legislature for all of your hard work on putting together a smart jobs program. We are in a jobs emergency. There is no need to go through the litany of statistics that prove this.

My understanding is that the committee is looking at potentially creating the opportunity for state agencies to enter into "public-private partnerships" where the state would hand over control of public services to private companies. We urge you not to move forward with such an untested and controversial program during this Special Session.

Public-private partnerships reduce transparency, accountability, and oversight of public services. Based upon experiments in other states there are a few "best practices" that we urge the committee to adopt:

- There must be legislative review over these projects to determine what is in fact a priority and once an agreement is reached if it is in the public interest.
- There must be public comment and review of these agreements.
- These agreements must be relatively short, or have the opportunity for renegotiation. The state should not be entering into an agreement that sets user fees 50 years out from today. We have no ability to know if that will be in the public interest years from now.
- There must be appropriate risk-sharing between the private contractors and the public.
- We need independent oversight.
- Strong worker protections are required. We should not be entering into agreements with contractors that disrespect workers' rights.
- National security considerations – we should not allow corporations in other countries to be able to design and operate a prison for example.

There is clearly a long list of different best practices that should be adopted included in the final language on this type of program. Considering that, and considering that other states are currently realizing that their P3 programs are not as beneficial as they expected, we urge the General Assembly not to move forward with this plan at this time.

Instead, we look forward to working with you to make sure we get this program done right – during the longer legislative session only a few months away. After all, our goal is the same: to create good, stable middle class jobs that give people hope and get our economy moving for Main Street.

Thank you very much.